

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 07347 091611Z
ACTION SS-25

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AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 7347

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, PORG, MARR, MOPS, LE, IS
SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON: WEIZMAN ON ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, HADDAD,
AND GENERAL ERSKINE

REF: (A) USUN 02357, (B) TEL AVIV 7255, (C) STATE 146494 (NOTAL
)

1. I TELEPHONED EZER WEIZMAN THIS AFTERNOON, JUNE 9, TO
TOUCH BASE INFORMALLY ON VARIOUS MATTERS, SINCE WE HAVE
NOT SEEN EACH OTHER IN OVER A WEEK AND HE HAS JUST
RETURNED FROM HIS MYSTERIOUS TRIP TO LONDON. IN COURSE
OF CONVERSATION I ASKED HIM IF EVERYTHING SEEMED TO BE
ON TRACK FOR THE WITHDRAWAL NEXT TUESDAY. HE SAID THAT
IN GENERAL IT SEEMED TO BE, ALTHOUGH HE WAS INCREASINGLY
CONCERNED ABOUT SOME OF GENERAL ERSKINE'S "HIGH-HANDED
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ATTITUDES." HE SAID HE HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT SIILASVUO
WAS NOT FULLY IN CONTROL OF ERSKINE, AND ALERTED ME TO
HIS WORRY THAT ERSKINE MIGHT BE TOO "HEAVY HANDED" AND
"COME ON TOO STRONG" IN ASSERTING UNIFIL AUTHORITY
OVER THE CHRISTIAN ENCLAVES.

2. SINCE WIEZMAN HAD INTRODUCED THE TOPIC, I

DECIDED TO FOLLOW THE LINE SUGGESTED IN REF A BY USUN. I URGED WEIZMAN TO COUNCIL HADDAD STRONGLY THAT HE SHOULD COOPERATE WITH UNIFIL IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE. WEIZMAN TOOK MY POINT, BUT IN RETURN ASKED ME TO DO WHATEVER WE COULD TO URGE GENERAL ERSKINE TO WALK VERY DELICATELY IN HIS DEALINGS WITH HADDAD AND COMPANY. HE AGAIN URGED THE IMPORTANCE OF UNIFIL'S TALKING DIRECTLY WITH HADDAD ABOUT ARRANGEMENTS BEFORE RPT BEFORE JUNE 13. WEIZMAN SAID MEANINGFULLY THAT "HADDAD WILL BE A GREAT DEAL EASIER TO DEAL WITH BEFORE THE 13TH WHILE WE ARE STILL AROUND THAN IF EVERYTHING IS LEFT UNTIL AFTER OUR DEPARTURE." I SAID I WOULD SEE WHAT WE COULD DO.

3. WEIZMAN WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE IDF HAD FIRM INFORMATION THAT AS MANY AS 300 PALESTINIANS WERE NOW BEHIND UNIFIL LINES IN VARIOUS GROUPS, AND THAT THE UN WAS PERMITTING SUPPLIES--THOUGH NOT ARMS--TO BE BROUGHT IN TO THEM. HE SAID THEY FOUND THIS "EXTREMELY ANNOYING TO CONTEMPLATE." HE THEN WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE COULD ASSURE ME CATEGORICALLY, THAT IN THE AREA TO BE EVACUATED NEXT TUESDAY THERE WERE CURRENTLY NO RPT NO PALESTINIAN ELEMENTS AT PRESENT. IF ANYONE CAME UP A MONTH OR TWO HENCE WITH THE STORY THAT THERE WERE A NUMBER OF PALESTINIAN "STAY BEHINDS" WHO HAD TO BE SUPPLIED, IT WOULD BE AN IMPOSSIBLE ARGUMENT TO SUSTAIN.

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4. AT ONE POINT IN OUR CONVERSATION I SAID I HAD A FAVOR TO ASK (THIS WAS A PERSONAL MATTER TOTALLY UNRELATED TO THE SUBJECT AT HAND). WEIZMAN BROKE IN TO SAY "DON'T ASK ME TO AGREE THAT THE SYRIANS SHOULD COME DOWN TO THE LITANI." I DID NOT RPT NOT RESPOND ON THIS SUBJECT, BUT MERELY WENT ON TO MAKE MY ORIGINAL POINT. MY DISTINCT IMPRESSION FROM THIS COMMENT WAS THAT IT CONFIRMED OUR PRIOR JUDGMENT HERE. IT IS BEST NOT RPT NOT TO ASK THE ISRAELIS ANYTHING ON THIS TOPIC, AT LEAST AT THIS MOMENT. THE LESS SAID ABOUT IT RIGHT NOW THE BETTER FOR ALL CONCERNED. (WE ARE COMMENTING SEPARATELY ON REF C.)

5. WEIZMAN ASKED ME TO BE IN TOUCH WITH HIM AT HOME OVER THE WEEKEND AT ANY TIME IF I HAD ANYTHING USEFUL TO SAY ABOUT THE "ERSKINE PROBLEM" WHICH HE HAD EARLIER ADDRESSED. HE MADE CLEAR HE WOULD LIKE OUR "GOOD OFFICES" ON THIS MATTER, AND I SAID MERELY THAT I WOULD SEE WHAT WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO DO.
LEWIS

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